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YSS 135/62  
24 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, CIA/PAD (NPIC)

FROM: 

50X1

SUBJECT: Proposal for Utilizing Satellite Photography for Deriving  
Economic Indicators

## 1. Security

This completely unclassified proposal quite strongly implies the present existence of high quality satellite photography and has drawn on the experience of personnel previously employed at the Center to present the quality and interpretability of this material. Such statements as "...facilities serving the various transportation media ... can be detected and identified in satellite photography with reasonable correctness." contain a far stronger statement of a priori knowledge than is usually found in comparable literature.

## 2. Discussion of aims

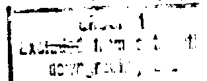
This proposal intends to:

- a. Acquire from satellite photography "both specific and statistical information about economic output and growth in world areas." These areas are described as "otherwise inaccessible" and the information as "entirely unavailable through other sources."
- b. "Integrate photo interpretation with economic statistics."
- c. Develop techniques for identifying economic innovation.
- d. Give attention to "both PI equipment design and man-machine relationships."

## 3. Discussion of methods

No statement is made in the proposal as to how the company intends to implement items b, c, and d above. With regard to item (a), the proposal pre-supposes the existence of "ample reliable information on 'normal' or previous conditions in the region under study." This would seem to conflict with the description of the region as "inaccessible" and the information as "unavailable". The proposal also assumes that this material will also be "presented to the interpreter in form easily comparable with the images on current photography." Where this material originates is not discussed by the proposal.

In the field of transportation information the proposal seems to contradict itself. It first states that transportation activity may be estimated by comparing the ratio of idle vehicles to moving ones. It then notes that as this may reflect only temporary conditions rather than continuing trends, we should have "sequential photography taken every two weeks or so". It then admits that this would be "impracticably complex" and sums up by saying that a simple comparison of this years photography with last years would be "useful but not conclusive."



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In the field of land use interpretation, the study states that old field boundaries may be visible for several years after the beginning of communes and that such traces may be a "source of confusion rather than enlightenment" if "current information on land ownership is not available." It would seem that if this information were available it would not be necessary to resort to satellite photography.

In the field of underground installations the proposal states: "The final identification must be well supported by reliable economic literature and strategic reports."

Finally, the list of "Significant Criteria of Economic Change" is quite out of date due to recent advances such as stereo coverage and improved systems.

**4. Evaluation of proposal**

There is nothing in this proposal that indicates new methods or advances in the field of photographic interpretation. There is very little that has not been done at one time or another by the Center or by the various service components and nothing that could not be done by the Center itself at any time that the requirement existed.

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